
Press release: Higher Education in Norway: Labour market relevance and outcomes

Norway's government needs to play a stronger role in steering the higher education system towards greater labour market relevance

Norway's higher education graduates generally enjoy some of the strongest labour market outcomes among OECD countries. A well-funded higher education system and a series of reforms over the past 20 years to improve the quality of higher education have been generating relatively strong discipline-specific knowledge and skills and a readiness to learn. Norway's robust and inclusive labour market has historically enabled the smooth transition from education to the world of work for higher education graduates.

However, past success is no guarantee of future success, especially as globalisation and technological change are transforming the Norwegian economy and in turn its skills needs. The pace of economic transformation may pose a challenge to the country's education system, which will need to be increasingly responsive to the changing skills needs of the labour market, according to a new OECD report.

Higher Education in Norway: Labour Market Relevance and Outcomes says that Norway's higher education system is not making full use of practices that have a track-record for supporting labour market relevance and outcomes, such as work-based learning, innovative teaching, effective collaboration between higher education institutions and the world of work among others. Norway's arts and humanities graduates – given their relatively strong skills – could particularly benefit from these practices on their transition to the labour market.

Timely completion of higher education also remains an issue in Norway despite past efforts to improve completion rate. There is more than can be done to ensure that students are better prepared for higher education, aware of the full range of options available to them, and have access to the supports they need to complete their programmes once in higher education.

The report also finds that the Norwegian higher education system is complex and has many actors playing complementary roles. Strengthened co-operation across agencies and levels of government in terms of data sharing, career guidance, and labour market issues could lead to better planning and decision making at the individual, institution and system level.

The report recommends that Norway:

- Support key practices that enable students develop the high-quality skills needed in the labour market
- Ensure the system offers a broad range of qualifications
- Provide students with the information needed to make informed choices
- Help students complete their study programmes
- Facilitate better co-ordination and use of labour market information
- Ensure better co-ordination across levels of government and agencies

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The report full report can be accessed at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264301757-en>.

For more information on the OECD's Higher Education team, see:
<http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/oecd-higher-education-team.htm>